

IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims, including any amendments made by this paper, follows below:

1. (Currently Amended) A shoe rack comprising:

a first shoe rack module including:

at least one frame structure;

a hanger coupled to said frame structure, said hanger being shaped to couple said shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface such that said frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface;

wherein the frame structure includes a plurality of support arms shaped to extend generally away from said support surface when said frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface;

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced inner rungs coupled to said frame structure;

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced outer rungs coupled to said frame structure; and

a plurality of generally vertically-oriented struts, each strut extending between adjacent ones of said outer rungs or adjacent ones of said support arms to provide vertical support to said outer rungs and said support arms, wherein at least one of said inner rungs, or at least one of said outer rungs or at least one of said struts is removably coupled to the associated component;

a second shoe rack module coupled to said first shoe rack module, said second shoe rack module including:

at least one frame structure including a plurality of support arms shaped to extend generally away from said support surface when said frame structure of said second shoe rack is located generally adjacent to said support surface;

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced inner rungs coupled to said frame structure of said second shoe rack module;

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced outer rungs coupled to said frame structure of said second shoe rack module; and

a plurality of generally vertically-oriented struts, each strut extending between adjacent ones of said outer rungs or adjacent ones of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide vertical support to said outer rungs and said support arms of said second shoe rack module; and

a generally vertically-oriented strut brace extending between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module.

2. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each inner rung extends between adjacent ones of said support arms and each outer rung extends between adjacent ones of said support arms.

3. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein the inner rungs, outer rungs, struts, support arms, and at least part of said frame structure of each shoe rack module form a plurality of generally closed, vertically stacked box-like structures.

4. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 3 wherein each box-like structure includes inner rungs, outer rungs, struts, support arms, and at least part of said frame structure of each shoe rack module forming front, rear, left and right sides, each of said sides being generally planar and generally perpendicular to each other.

5. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein the frame structure of each shoe rack module includes a pair of frames, said frames being generally parallel and spaced apart from each other, each frame including a generally longitudinally-extending base portion and at least two spaced support arms extending generally perpendicular to and generally away from the associated base portion.

6. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 5 wherein each inner and outer rung of each shoe rack module extends generally perpendicular to the associated base portion and to the support arms of both frames, and wherein each strut of each shoe rack module extends generally parallel to the base and generally perpendicular to the support arms of both frames of the associated shoe rack module.

7. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each strut is integrally formed with an associated support arm.

8. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each strut is removably coupled to the associated adjacent ones of said outer rungs or adjacent ones of said support arms.

9. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 8 wherein said frame structure of each shoe rack module further includes a plurality of strut receptacles which receive said struts therein in an interference fit.

10. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each outer rung is removably coupled to ~~said~~ the associated frame structure.

11. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ each frame structure includes a plurality of outer rung receptacles which receive said associated outer rungs therein in an interference fit.

12. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each inner rung is removably coupled to ~~said~~ the associated frame structure.

13. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ each frame structure further includes a plurality of inner rung receptacles which receive ~~said~~ the associated inner rungs therein in an interference fit.

14. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each support arm is integral with ~~said~~ the associated frame structure.

15. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ each frame structure further includes an upper connector portion and a lower connector portion such that at least one additional frame structure can be coupled to ~~said~~ each frame structure via said upper and lower connector portions in a modular manner.

16. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 15 wherein ~~said~~ each upper connector portion and ~~said~~ each lower connector portion further includes a plurality of teeth.

17. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 16 further comprising a cover adapted to couple to ~~said one of said~~ lower connector ~~portion~~ portions and provide a smooth outer appearance to said one of said lower connector ~~portion~~ portions.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein said hanger is removably coupled to said frame structure of said first shoe rack module.

20. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein said hanger further includes a generally inverted “U” shaped receiving portion adapted to fit over an upper edge of said support surface.

21. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 20 wherein said hanger includes a plurality of perforations to facilitate removal of said receiving portion and a plurality of openings to receive fasteners therethrough to couple said hanger to said support surface.

22. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each outer rung is generally horizontally aligned with an associated inner rung.

23. (Currently Amended) A shoe rack comprising:

a first shoe rack module including:

at least one frame structure including a base portion and a plurality of supports extending generally away from said base portion, said frame structure including a plurality of inner rung coupling portions and a plurality of outer rung coupling portions;

a hanger coupled or adapted to be coupled to said frame structure, said hanger being shaped to couple said shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface;

a plurality of inner rungs adapted to couple to said inner rung coupling portions of said frame structure such that the inner rungs extend generally perpendicular to said frame structure, said inner rungs being adapted to couple to said inner rung coupling portions such that said inner rungs are generally aligned in a first plane;

a plurality of outer rungs adapted to couple to said outer rung coupling portions of said frame structure such that the outer rungs extend generally perpendicular to said frame structure and generally parallel to said plurality of inner rungs, said outer rungs being adapted to couple to said outer rung coupling portions such that said outer rungs are generally aligned in a second plane that is generally parallel to and spaced apart from said first plane; and

a plurality of rigid struts adapted to extend between adjacent ones of said support arms or said outer rungs to provide support to said outer rungs and said support arms;

a second shoe rack module configured to be coupled to said first shoe rack module, said second shoe rack module including:

at least one frame structure including a base portion and a plurality of supports extending generally away from said base portion, said frame structure of said second shoe rack module including a plurality of inner rung coupling portions and a plurality of outer rung coupling portions;

a plurality of inner rungs adapted to couple to said inner rung coupling portions of said frame structure of said second shoe rack module such that the inner rungs of said second shoe rack module extend generally perpendicular to said frame structure of said second shoe rack module, said inner rungs being adapted to couple to said inner rung coupling portions of said second shoe rack module such that said inner rungs are generally aligned in a first plane;

a plurality of outer rungs adapted to couple to said outer rung coupling portions of said frame structure of said second shoe rack module such that the outer rungs of said second shoe rack module extend generally perpendicular to said frame structure of said second shoe rack module and generally parallel to said plurality of inner rungs of said second shoe rack module, said outer rungs being adapted to couple to said outer rung coupling portions of said second shoe rack module such that said outer rungs are generally aligned in a second plane that is generally parallel to and spaced apart from said first plane; and

a plurality of rigid struts adapted to extend between adjacent ones of said support arms or said outer rungs of said second shoe rack module to provide support to said outer rungs and said support arms of said second shoe rack module; and

a generally vertically-oriented strut brace configured to extend between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module.

24. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein each inner rung is adapted to extend between adjacent ones of said support arms and each outer rung is adapted to extend between adjacent ones of said support arms.

25. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein the inner rungs, outer rungs, struts, support arms, and at least part of said frame structure of said first and second shoe rack modules are adapted to form a plurality of generally closed, rigid vertically stacked box-like structures when assembled.

26. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein the frame structure of said first and second shoe rack modules each includes a pair of frames, said frames being adapted to be generally parallel and spaced apart from each other.

27. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein said hanger includes a generally inverted “U” shaped receiving portion adapted to fit over an upper edge of said support surface.

28. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein each outer rung is adapted to be generally aligned with an associated inner rung.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for assembling a shoe rack, comprising the steps of:
obtaining ~~at least one~~ a first modular frame structure having a hanger coupled thereto, said hanger being shaped to couple said shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface such that said first frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface, and wherein the first frame structure includes a plurality of support arms extending generally away from said support surface when said first frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface, and wherein the support arms include a plurality of struts extending generally perpendicularly between adjacent ones of said support arms to provide vertical support to said outer rungs and said support arms;
releasably coupling a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced inner rungs to said first frame structure; ~~and~~
releasably coupling a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced outer rungs to said first frame structure;
providing a second modular frame structure configured to store shoes therein or thereon; and
coupling said second modular frame structure to a bottom edge of said first modular frame structure with a strut brace such that said strut brace provides outer vertical support to a distal end of one of said support arms or one of said outer rungs of said first modular frame structure.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising the step of coupling said shoe rack to said vertical support surface.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 further comprising the step of locating shoes on said shoe rack such that said shoes rest on and are supported by selected ones of said inner and outer rungs.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for storing shoes, comprising the steps of:

providing a shoe rack, wherein the shoe rack includes:

a first shoe rack module including:

at least one frame structure,

a hanger coupled to said frame structure, said hanger being shaped to couple said shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface such that said frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface,

wherein the frame structure includes a plurality of support arms shaped to extend generally away from said support surface when said frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface,

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced inner rungs coupled to said frame structure,

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced outer rungs coupled to said frame structure, and

a plurality of generally vertically-oriented struts, each strut extending between adjacent ones of said outer rungs or adjacent ones of said support arms to provide vertical support to said outer rungs and said support arms, wherein at least one of said inner rungs, or at least one of said outer rungs or at least one of said struts is removably coupled to the associated component;

a second shoe rack module coupled to said first shoe rack module, said second shoe rack module being configured to store shoes thereon or therein, said second shoe rack module having a distal end configured to be located away from said support surface when said second shoe rack module is located adjacent to said support surface; and

a generally vertically-oriented strut brace extending between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and said

distal end of said of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module;

coupling the shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface; and
placing a pair of shoes onto the inner and outer rungs such that the shoes rest on the inner and outer rungs.

33. (Currently Amended) A shoe rack comprising:

a first shoe rack module comprising:

a frame structure;

a hanger coupled to said frame structure, said hanger being shaped to couple said shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface such that said frame structure is located generally adjacent to said support surface;

wherein the frame structure includes a plurality of support arms extending generally away from said support surface;

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced inner rungs coupled to said frame structure;

a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced outer rungs extending between adjacent ones of said support arms, wherein each outer rung is generally horizontally aligned with an associated inner rung; and

a plurality of generally vertically-extending rigid connectors, each connector extending between adjacent ones of said outer rungs, adjacent ones of said inner rungs, or adjacent ones of said support arms to provide vertical support to said inner rungs, outer rungs, or support arms;

a second shoe rack module coupled to said first shoe rack module, said second shoe rack module being configured to store shoes thereon or therein, said second shoe rack module having a distal end configured to be located away from said support surface when said second shoe rack module is located adjacent to said support surface; and

a generally vertically-oriented strut brace extending between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and said distal end of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) A shoe rack comprising:

a first shoe rack module including:

a pair of frames, said frames being generally parallel and spaced apart from each other, each frame including a generally longitudinally-extending base and at least two spaced support arms extending generally perpendicular to and generally away from said base;

a pair of spaced, generally parallel inner rungs extending generally perpendicular to and between said frames;

a pair of spaced, generally parallel outer rungs extending generally perpendicular to and between said frames;

a pair of spaced, generally parallel struts, each strut extending generally parallel to and between portions of an associated frame; and

wherein said frames, inner rungs, outer rungs and struts form a generally closed box-like shape and wherein at least one of said inner rungs, or at least one of said outer rungs or at least one of said struts is removably coupled to the associated component;

a second shoe rack module coupled to said first shoe rack module;

a generally vertically-oriented strut brace extending between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to an upper one of said first or second shoe rack modules; and

a hanger coupled to at least an upper one of said frames shoe rack modules, said hanger being shaped to couple said shoe rack to a generally vertically-oriented support surface.

36. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein said at least one of said inner rungs, said at least one of said outer rungs or said at least one of said struts that is removably coupled is removably coupled by an interference fit.

37. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein at least one of said inner rungs, and at least one of said outer rungs, and at least one of said struts is removably coupled to the associated component.

38. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each strut is rigid.

39. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein both of said frame ~~structure~~ is structures are rigid.

40. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein at least one of said inner rungs, or at least one of said outer rungs is adapted to be removably coupled to the associated component.

41. (Currently Amended) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein both of said frame ~~structure is~~ structures are rigid.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein each strut is rigid.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein each strut is positioned such that each strut is positioned between adjacent ones of said support arms before either of said coupling steps.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29 wherein each strut is positioned such that each strut is positioned between adjacent ones of said support arms after either of said coupling steps.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein said at least one of said inner rungs, said at least one of said outer rungs or said at least one of said struts that is removably coupled is removably coupled by an interference fit.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32 wherein each strut is rigid.
47. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 33 wherein at least one of said inner rungs, or at least one of said outer rungs or at least one of said connectors is removably coupled to the associated component.
48. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 35 wherein said at least one of said inner rungs, said at least one of said outer rungs or said at least one of said struts that is removably coupled is removably coupled by an interference fit.
49. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 35 wherein each strut is rigid.
50. (Previously Presented) The shoe rack of claim 35 wherein said generally closed box-like shape is generally rigid in all directions thereof.
51. (Canceled)
52. (New) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein said strut brace is removably coupled to said first and second shoe rack modules.
53. (New) The shoe rack of claim 1 further comprising another generally vertically-oriented strut brace extending between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module, wherein said strut brace and said another strut brace are located on opposite sides of said first shoe rack module.
54. (New) The shoe rack of claim 1 wherein each arm has a base end located generally adjacent to said support surface and said distal end of each arm is located generally opposite said

base end, and wherein said strut base is located generally adjacent to said distal end of one of said arms.

55. (New) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein said strut brace is configured to be removably coupled to said first and second shoe rack modules.

56. (New) The shoe rack of claim 23 further comprising another generally vertically-oriented strut brace configured to extend between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module.

57. (New) The shoe rack of claim 23 wherein each arm has a base end located generally adjacent to said support surface and said distal end is located generally opposite said base end, and wherein said strut base is configured to be located generally adjacent to said distal end of one of said arms.

58. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein said coupling step includes removably coupling said strut brace said first and second shoe rack modules.

59. (New) The shoe rack of claim 33 wherein said strut brace is removably coupled to said first and second shoe rack modules.

60. (New) The shoe rack of claim 33 further comprising another generally vertically-oriented strut brace extending between one of said outer rungs or a distal end of one of said support arms of said first shoe rack module and said distal end of said second shoe rack module to provide outer vertical support to said first shoe rack module, wherein said strut brace and said another strut brace are located on opposite sides of said first shoe rack module.

61. (New) The shoe rack of claim 33 wherein each arm has a base end located generally adjacent to said support surface and said distal end of each arm is located generally opposite said base end, and wherein said strut base is located generally adjacent to said distal end of one of said arms.

62. (New) The shoe rack of claim 33 wherein said second shoe rack module includes:
a frame structure configured to be located generally adjacent to said support surface, wherein the frame structure of said second shoe rack module includes a plurality of support arms extending generally away from said support surface;
a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced inner rungs coupled to said frame structure of said second shoe rack module;
a plurality of generally horizontally-oriented, vertically spaced outer rungs extending between adjacent ones of said support arms of said frame structure of said second shoe rack module, wherein each outer rung is generally horizontally aligned with an associated inner rung; and
a plurality of generally vertically-extending rigid connectors, each connector extending between adjacent ones of said outer rungs, adjacent ones of said inner rungs, or adjacent ones of said support arms of said second shoe rack module to provide vertical support to said inner rungs, outer rungs, or support arms of said second shoe rack module.